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POSTAL REGULATORY  
COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

November 19, 2011

Postal Regulatory Commission  
901 New York Avenue NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20268-0001  
Office of PAGR

RE: Docket #1375909-56160

As a resident and business operator in the City of Odin, I would like to appeal the decision to close the Odin Post Office.

Having managed a business in the community for 37 years, I know that profitability is a necessity in any business. However, by restricting the Postal Service presence in small towns, USPS patrons will seek other alternatives to using the mail. This will cause even more financial stress on the USPS.

Despite the claims being made by the USPS that all services to small towns can be handled through a rural mail carrier, I would vehemently argue to the contrary. While the rural carrier can sell postage and pick up parcels, letters, etc., the carrier's presence in the community is for at best 30 minutes each day. That means that any mail that is to be sent after the carrier leaves town will be delayed until the next day. Or, as USPS officials suggested, deliver the mail to the nearest operating post office. For our small town, that means driving at least 9 miles one way. That, to me, would be contrary to the universal service obligation of the USPS.

I would ask the commission members if they could plan all of their mailing functions for a day by 9:30 or 10:00 each morning? I know that in my insurance business that it is virtually impossible. As an insurance agent, I am required to submit documents to our carriers under time constraints dictated by the State of Minnesota. This would force me or an employee of my business to drive to the neighboring Post Office to assure a timely postmark.

During these turbulent economic times, there is an emphasis on sustaining small businesses. The maintenance and expansion of these entities creates the employment necessary to turn our economic crisis around. By increasing the costs related to conducting business by closing the small post offices, jobs will not be created nor will business expansion be considered.

My wife worked for the USPS for 31 years. The last years were spent as the postmaster of the Odin Installation. She has always maintained that the Postal Service spent too much money in administrative and bureaucratic costs instead of working on ways to improve the efficiency of the service. In researching information relative to the postal service, it was found that the 7 top officials in the USPS Northland District have salaries that total in excess of one million dollars,

yet they never touch a piece of mail. Those funds would subsidize 40 to 50 small offices such as ours and continue to provide service to thousands of postal patrons.

As postmaster, my wife enjoyed working with the people who patronized the office. She also went above and beyond the call of duty to assist her customers and promote the Post Office. That effort was rewarded by a loyal customer base. However, the frustration and stress of trying to keep up with the bureaucratic mandates caused her to retire. She often states that it is a huge relief not to have to deal with endless maze of reports and requirements.

If there is no other alternative but to close the office, I would ask that a blue USPS drop box be set up as it is now in the City. Further, I would ask that the star route driver, who trucks the mail to the various offices, pick up the mail in that box each evening. The driver travels a route that would take him either through or close to the City of Odin each day regardless. This function would temper the inconvenience caused by the office closure considerably.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

  
Paul S. Berg